

If You Find a Traffic Signal Out

If you find yourself at an intersection controlled by a traffic signal, and it is not working (usually due to a power outage, or a traffic collision damaging the controller) there are rules of the road to follow. Usually in these type incidents, an officer will be dispatched to direct traffic. If there is a city wide, or a large outage, many intersections and signals might be affected – more than the number of officers working at that time. At locations where the signal is not working, and an officer is not present, the state statute indicates the intersection is to be treated as though it is stop sign controlled.

Tennessee Code Annotated 55-8-110, Traffic Control Signals, 8(c), indicates should the signal ***not work all*** drivers must come to a complete stop prior to entering the intersection. The rules for right-of-way are also to be followed. That means, if two cars arrive at the intersection at about the same time, the vehicle to the right has the right-of-way to proceed through the intersection.

Another situation that drivers might experience is a usual three light traffic signal that is ***flashing red or yellow***. In these instances the driver approaching the flashing light must obey the rules for the flashing color. If flashing red, the driver is to come to a complete stop before entering the intersection. If flashing yellow, the driver does not have to stop but must use caution entering the intersection.

The potential for traffic collisions increase at intersections when power outages occur and the signal is affected. Drivers are encouraged to use caution and pay particular attention to right-of-way and insure the intersection is clear before entering. Drive defensively!

Any questions about this or other traffic related issues may be directed to Chief Paul Blackwell at (931) 455-0530 or pblackwell@tullahomatin.gov .